



News Release

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Sierra National Forest Equipment Operators Richard Bailey and Joe Bedell Retire from Sierra National Forest Road Crew

Clovis, CA— Richard Bailey and Joe Bedell are retiring today from the Sierra National Forest Road Maintenance Crew. Richard has 39 years with the Sierra National Forest and Joe Bedell has been with the Sierra for 44 years.

Both are very experienced equipment operators who have most recently been working with their crew on important storm preparation and repair of the French Fire area to prevent erosion and damage to the existing road system and resources from storm events in the burned area.

Richard plans to spend some time on the coast with his wife, Hope, and take a trip to Pismo to “enjoy the clam chowder at Brad’s”. Richard and Hope, who live in Fresno, have a daughter, Yvonne and son-in-law, Kellen, who they plan to spend more time with along with their grandchildren, Makaela and Emma. When asked if they would be spending any time camping in the future, Hope said, yes, “at the Tenaya!” Hope recalled living in Wishon when they were just starting out and hearing the phone ring during the frequent thunderstorms and Richard warning her, “don’t answer the phone during lightening or you will get shocked”! Hopefully a trip to Hawaii will also be in the plans with Joe saying “you might not come back!”

Joe plans to spend more time with his wife, Lynn, and get caught up with work on their property in Ahwahnee. Joe and Lynne have two children, Lee and Joy, and five grandchildren between them, all boys and one granddaughter aged four, who he admits is a “bit spoiled” being the only girl. Joe and Lynne might do a road trip to Vermont to visit family at some point in the future.

Although it is difficult to sum up a combined 83 years of experiences working on the Sierra National Forest, Richard and Joe recalled people and projects they’d worked with across the Forest, remembering Leo Martin, as their Lead Foreman when they first started. A highlight for Joe was working on the Pine Logging Camp demolition a few years back where he was involved with the crushing and demolition of about 80 buildings. He also recalled an assignment working on the Los Padres fixing flood damaged areas and doing some brush work on the Mendocino National Forest, where “the town of Covelo was so small that the restaurants weren’t open every day so we would have to drive into Willits for dinner”. Richard recalled his younger days working on the bridge on Cow

Creek on the High Sierra Ranger District and the engineering and work that went into installing that bridge, which has poured concrete siding and was delivered in 2 pieces. Unfortunately, very recently a large tree fell across this bridge damaging the structural integrity so that it is temporarily closed to travel at this time.

Both have fond memories of the Sierra and leave with a feeling that the Road Crew is in good hands, with co-workers Jason De La Cruz, Joseph Bishop and Tim Hedberg who they say “will rise to the occasion” along with their supervisor and newly appointed Forest Engineer, Antonio Cabrera.

A combined retirement party is in the works with more information to follow.

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